

### Romania - part of the EU's Eastern Frontier: opportunities versus responsibilities

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## Romania – Part of the EU's Eastern Frontier. Opportunities versus Responsibilities

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**Abstract:** After 2007 Romania became one of the eastern frontier states of the European Union. This double status of national state and frontier state comes itself with both the responsibility of keeping a high level of security for the EU's border, and at the same time it can be seen as an opportunity for the Romanian state of increasing its regional power inside and outside the organization. At the same time, the Eastern non-EU member states seemed to be caught in the middle between the Russian Federation and the EU, fact that affected their national security level and tended to create a fragmentation within the EU. After its integration in the European structures, Romania's strategy was constructed around the aspect of supporting and promoting the Republic of Moldova's EU integration. The present paper analyses this double status of Romania and its possible effects.

**Key-words:** Romania, Republic of Moldova, Russia, Eastern frontier, security, national interest / preference.

### Introduction

The EU is passing through a period of transition, during which, both state and non-state players are involved in a process of adaptation to the new security realities that appeared closer after Eastern enlargement process. The new member states that represent the new eastern frontier line of the Union have to fit in with their double status: they are national states that have to defend their national interests or to negotiate their own national preferences with other national players, but at the same time they are member states of the EU and have to protect and promote the interest of the entire organization in their relationships with the outside players. Additionally, in 2004 Romania became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), moment from which Romania started to represent the frontier line of the eastern dimension of this organization, too.

The present paper's hypothesis consists of identifying the responsibility and opportunities of Romania in terms of national interests/national preferences over the Eastern frontier security dimension, fact that meets with Romania's double status: a member of NATO and of the EU. The point of this hypothesis is especially important as these national interests/preferences can influence positively or negatively the development of the entire Eastern region's security level, if we take into consideration the bilateral relations that this state has developed with countries as Moldova and Ukraine. It can also influence the entire organization's security level if we take into consideration eastern states like the Russian Federation, a country with regional capabilities and global aspirations.

From a methodological point of view, there will be made an official direct documents analysis (strategies, speeches, treaties, bilateral, multilateral agreements etc.) and indirect documents as analysis of the most relevant scholars' works, conceptual analysis and a theoretical

approach that is adequate for the development of a glibly analysis over the Romanian state's behaviour and attitudes towards specific events.

### **Theoretical approach**

In what regards the theoretical analysis, there are some fundamental concepts like: national interest, national preferences, and security that need to be defined, framed within their theoretical approaches and analysed accordingly for then to be subjected to a practical analysis on the specific case of Romania.

The concept of national interest is functioning under the realist and neo-realist logic that considers alliances as the most suitable forms of security for a national state<sup>1</sup>. The realist scholars believe that national states are central elements of the international system. Even within international organizations, that are mostly intergovernmental, states hold the most important role as they defend and promote their national interests. Morghentau believed that every state had its own set of interests, which are established unilaterally, selfishly and most important rationally. These national interests are defined in terms of power. The objective of every state is to maximize its power and to protect its internal security against external threats. In order to understand a state's foreign policy, it is necessary, first, to understand its national interest as it is developed according to some objective variables as: the geographical position of that state, the natural resources that are owned by it, governing quality, its diplomacy, its economic, technological and military development etc<sup>2</sup>. States need to act within an international system which is anarchic, in the sense of a non-existent international government that is recognized and accepted by all states and that can coerce the units (the national state) to act in a certain way<sup>3</sup>. This is a system in which *"nobody is legitimate to command and no-one is obliged to obey"*<sup>4</sup>. Being the main players of the international arena, states needed a system that is anarchic, because in a contrary situation, there would have been a central institution/organization that would have had more power and capabilities than them and this could have been perceived as a threat. This systemic quality gives states the liberty to act according to their own interests, but at the same time it has a coercive character, states being obliged to take into account other state's interests and power before taking any action.

The security/insecurity of both the system and the states is also important in the realist paradigm as: *"nothing is undermining more the level of security [.....] than the aggregation of power in a certain way that produces fear and negative reaction"*<sup>5</sup>. If a state increases its power, this action can generate a negative reaction coming from other state as the first's actions are perceived by the second as being an attempt to minimize its power.

Starting with 1970s Waltz's neo-realism came into attention. He believes that in order to develop a glibly analysis over the international relations we need to make abstraction of every state's attribute (for example a function) and take into consideration only its capabilities. Then, states are under the influence of the international system, which is also anarchic. In this way, the

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<sup>1</sup> Scott Burchill et al. *Teorii ale relatiilor internationale*. (Iasi: Institutul European, 2008). pp.50-51

<sup>2</sup> Andrei Miroiu et al. *Manual de relatii internationale*. (Iasi: Polirom, 2006). pp.99-100

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem. p.103

<sup>4</sup> Waltz, Kenneth N. *Theory of international politics*. (Iasi: Polirom, 2006). p.88

<sup>5</sup> Stefano Guzzini. *Realism si relatii internationale: povestea fara sfirsit a unei morti anuntate: realismul în relatiile internationale si în economia politica internationala*. (Iasi: Institutul European, 2000). p.93

units or the states are put in two possible situations: they can subordinate to other states that have more capabilities, or try to rule others<sup>1</sup>. The number of the states, which have sufficient capabilities in order to be defined as great powers, is defining the international order at a certain moment. This order is not fixed or unchangeable, but it is always reacting to the pressures of the anarchic international system and of the states that are within it. Those countries are in a continuous race for power, race that is supported by the relative character of power, which most likely has a zero sum result<sup>2</sup>. For example, during the Cold War, the USA and the USSR have created a bipolar international system. After the disbandment of USSR, this order was replaced by a unipolar system, in which USA was the sole state that had the most developed capabilities, thus holding the hegemony of the system<sup>3</sup>. Nowadays, the international order is passing through a period of transition as it is heading towards a multipolar or a non-polar system, in which more and more states will get involved in the process of influencing, establishing and developing the current and the future international order.

In what regards the structure of the international system, in the case of neo-realism it is also anarchic, as Waltz believes that *"international structure emerges from the interaction of states and then constrains them from taking certain actions while propelling them toward others"*<sup>4</sup>. This anarchic character of the international system is determining the attitudes and states' behaviour, creating the situation in which every state has to defend its national interest as no other entity is going to do this for it. In this way, states *"at minimum, seek their own preservation"*, thus they want to maintain their current position in which they can protect their independency, sovereignty and their autonomy. At the opposite side, states *"at maximum, drive for universal domination"*, but *"survival, however, is not a small quantity of domination, nor is domination a surplus of survival"*<sup>5</sup>. At the same time, Waltz argues that states want to obtain some strategic advantages or they may want to peacefully co-exist with other states, something that can be achieved through the membership of alliances, especially for those states that do not have the necessary capabilities for them to be called great powers or regional powers<sup>6</sup>. This is the case of the Romanian state, which has chosen to enter NATO, in order to obtain some strategic benefits and to protect its security, especially if we take into consideration the inefficient and unproductive bilateral relations between it and the Russian Federation. Therefore we can claim that in this situation Romania tried to balance Russia's power using NATO's capabilities. It has to be added the fact that the geographical position held by Romania (at the intersection point between Central Europe, Black Sea region, Caucasus, South Europe and Central Asia) was mainly producing a state of insecurity, both at internal and external level<sup>7</sup>. Taking into account all these elements plus the

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<sup>1</sup> Cit in Scott Burchill et al. *Teorii ale relatiilor internationale*. (Iasi: Institutul European, 2008). pp.50-51

<sup>2</sup> Cit in Scott Burchill et al. *Theories of International Relations*. Third edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005): [http://gendocs.ru/docs/35/34939/conv\\_1/file1.pdf](http://gendocs.ru/docs/35/34939/conv_1/file1.pdf) accessed on 15 June 2012. pp.35, 65

<sup>3</sup> Ioan Horga, "Imperial Trends in the Global International Society", in S. Sipos, Mircea Brie, I. Horga, I. Sarov, I. Gumenai, *Politici imperiale in Estul si vestul spatiului romanesc*, Editura Universitatii din Oradea, Editura Cartdidact Chisinau 1, 2010, pp. 525-534

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem. p.35

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem. p.42

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem. p.42

<sup>7</sup> Constantin Moștofleu et al. *Romania membru al Aliantei Nord Atlantice* (București: Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare, 2004) [http://cssas.unap.ro/ro/pdf\\_carti/romania\\_membru\\_al\\_aliantei.pdf](http://cssas.unap.ro/ro/pdf_carti/romania_membru_al_aliantei.pdf) .accessed on 15 January 2011. p.15

lack of national capabilities for Romania in order to become a regional power that was able to establish or at least negotiate with Russia for a stable and secure balance of power within the Eastern region, NATO became the solution for it in order to protect its national interests, especially in what regards the military capabilities that some of the allies posed at the alliance's disposal<sup>1</sup>. Being a rational state, under the neo-realist paradigm, Romania made a cost-benefit analysis and considered that it was too expensive from a security point of view to ensure by itself its national sovereignty and independency, taking into account the period of political transition that Romania was passing<sup>2</sup>.

At the other side the concept of national preferences was developed under the liberalism paradigm, especially under the institutionalist neo-liberalism one. Its scholars promote the legal integrated communities as a form of state's preferred security, as for example, the European Union. Coming back to the concept of national preferences, it can be defined as an ordered and weighted set of values that aims future background outcomes<sup>3</sup>. This concept was developed mainly by Andrew Moravcsik, who also believed that states are rational entities, capable of making a cost-benefit analysis from which to extract the best possible outcome, both in terms of security and economy. But, he differentiates himself from the neo-realist paradigm, because he assumes the fact that national governments reach to this decision only after they have passed through what Putnam called the "two level games"<sup>4</sup> (at domestic and international level). In this situation the governments, after the internal decision-making process ends, establish the national interest of that specific state. Once established, this interest is structured in national preferences and together with the position of that state vis-a-vis some other states, some international organizations or vis-a-vis some external event, is defended and promoted at the negotiations that take place at the international level<sup>5</sup>. This is the fundamental distinction between the two paradigms: if in the case of realism and neo-realism the national interest is something given by external factors as the anarchic character of the international system, the geographical position of that state or its capabilities and until some point this interest is fixed (every state wants to defend and increase its national security), in the case of neo-liberalism the national preference is not fixed, being able to vary according to the domestic interests. It is also very important to make a distinction between the national interest of the neo-realists', which is referring mainly to hard security and the national preferences which refer more to political and economical aspects<sup>6</sup>. Then,

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<sup>1</sup> Coord. Mihail Ionescu. *Romania-NATO. Cronologie 1989-2004*. (București: Editura Militară, 2004) <http://www.online.cercetare-aplicata.ro/ro/document/romania-nato-cronologie-1989-2004-editura-militar%C4%83-bucure%C8%99ti-2004-576-p>. accessed on 15 January 2011. p.20

<sup>2</sup> Constantin Moștoflei et al. *Romania membru al Alianței Nord Atlantice*. (București: Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare, 2004). [http://cssas.unap.ro/ro/pdf\\_carti/romania\\_membru\\_al\\_alianței.pdf](http://cssas.unap.ro/ro/pdf_carti/romania_membru_al_alianței.pdf) accessed on 15 January 2011. p.40

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Moravcsik. *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998). p.24

<sup>4</sup> Robert D. Putnam. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games". *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer 1988), pp. 427-460. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2706785.pdf?acceptTC=true> accessed on 15 June 2012. p.434

<sup>5</sup> *Theories of European integration*. [http://www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/9780199544813/bache3e\\_ch01.pdf](http://www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/9780199544813/bache3e_ch01.pdf) accessed on 15 June 2012. pp.12-13

<sup>6</sup> Cit in Scott Burchill et al. *Theories of International Relations*. Third edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005): [http://gendocs.ru/docs/35/34939/conv\\_1/file1.pdf](http://gendocs.ru/docs/35/34939/conv_1/file1.pdf) accessed on 15 June 2012. p.65

these national preferences are further negotiated at international level, as states choose the suitable international institution in order to implement them. According to Helen V. Miller, the international institutions “*can impose their preferences on countries that joint subsequently because voting rules privilege the status quo*”<sup>1</sup>. In this case, at the EU’s level, the decision does not reflect the will for a common good, but the aggregation of the population’s interests which are established at the level of their domestic institutions, which in turn negotiate them further at international level.

Moravcsik believes that these preferences belonging to the national governments are represented by the balance between the economic interests present at the domestic level, and not by the political interests of some decision makers or by some purely strategic, security reasons especially if it is the case of the EU. For him, at the level of such supranational organisations, national preferences are predominant. He does not believe in the interest of the organisation *per se*, explaining that the decisions that are taken within such an organisation are the result of the negotiations that are taking place between states, which have different sets of national preferences. In this situation the aspect that counts the most is not the common will or the common good, but the relative bargaining power of a state. Moreover, international organisations like the EU exist because states prefer to deliver some parts of their authority/sovereignty in the favour of an organisation because they want to be ensured that other states are honouring their negotiation engagements, too<sup>2</sup>. For example, at the level of the EU Romania’s national preferences as a member state that is situated at the Eastern Frontier of the organisation can be found in the desire to develop positive relations with Moldova or Ukraine or states from the Caucasian Region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia). Following this logic Romania was a promoter of the Partnerships that were signed between the European structures and the afore mentioned countries. If in the case of the first two states we can talk about frontier security and securitization reasons that have also an economic impact, in the case of the last states Romania’s national preferences are mainly economic ones.

Within the liberalist paradigm there was developed the institutionalist neo-liberalism. Its scholars concentrated their research on analysing political economy matters. For them also the international system is anarchic, states are rational players, but the gains are seen in absolute terms, not in relative ones as in the case of neo-realists. This last reason has the capacity to make states cooperate more often as they do not perceive each other in competitive terms. They do not need to measure their gains by relating to others’ gains; therefore their power does not decrease or increases according to other’s power development<sup>3</sup>. Taking into consideration this undeniable chance for cooperation between states, the institutionalist neo-liberalism promotes the role of institutions that have the capacity to increase even more the level of cooperation between them<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Helen V. Miller, “Power, Independence and Nonstate Actors in World Politics”, in Helen V. Miller & Andrew Moravcsik, *Power, Independence and Nonstate Actors in World Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). p.9

<sup>2</sup> *Theories of European integration*. [http://www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/9780199544813/bache3e\\_ch01.pdf](http://www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/9780199544813/bache3e_ch01.pdf) accessed on 15 June 2012. pp.13-14

<sup>3</sup> Cit in Scott Burchill et al. *Theories of International Relations*. Third edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) [http://gendocs.ru/docs/35/34939/conv\\_1/file1.pdf](http://gendocs.ru/docs/35/34939/conv_1/file1.pdf) accessed on 15 June 2012. p.65

<sup>4</sup> Robert Jervis. *Realism, Neoliberalism, and Cooperation Understanding the Debate*.

<http://www.pols.boun.edu.tr/uploads%5Cfiles%5C632.pdf> accessed on 15 June 2012. pp.44-45

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Member states do not perceive themselves as parts of an anarchic international system that oblige them to mainly be in competitive situations where everyone has to follow its own national interest, which mostly is a conflicting one. In this situation states tend to develop institutions more often, because an increased level of safety is given by their stability. Being part of it, a state will be less worried about who gains more and who gains less. Defection itself is less probable in this situation as the rules and the procedures developed within that institution will make it too costly for a state to take it into consideration. Hence, states will choose to cooperate<sup>1</sup>. An organisation that can be analysed through neo-liberalist lens is the European Union. In its case we can hardly believe that Germany's gains are perceived by Romania in relative terms.

The concept of security was analysed by many scholars, but it represents one of the most important ideas of the Copenhagen School. Its scholars, among whom we can find Barry Buzan, believe that security as it is understood by the realists and neo-realists is no longer applicable to nowadays international relations, because the nature of threats themselves has changed over time. In this sense, we no longer have only military security, but also political, economic, societal and environmental security<sup>2</sup>.

### **The European Union**

The European Union (EU) is already a classical example of a legally integrated community, where states can promote, negotiate and implement their national preferences. The EU started from being an economic project, aimed to create a unique market, where member states could cooperate at the level of low politics, without having to face impediments like the lack of trust, the reluctance of state to cede some of their sovereignty in hard politics etc. In this matter the Euro Zone and the Schengen Space were created both being areas where member states can cooperate easier. The international system is also viewed in terms of anarchy, therefore states need some incentives in order to cooperate and the easiest ones to be obtained are the economic gains. This economical space, under a spill over effect created a deeper cooperation among the parties and eventually created a legally integrated space. In 2014, the EU is one of the most developed international organisations worldwide with 28 member states and other acceding states, in which the co-decision procedure between the European Union's Council and the European Parliament is more and more used. The EU started to be developed also in hard security terms through the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). It is a stable institution that was consolidated even deeper through the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. Due to the nature of the international system, states still tend to distrust each other, therefore they find useful to strengthen this institution through structures like the European Court of Justice, the European Commission which is known to be the guardian of the European treaties in order to ensure themselves that the other member states will follow the same provision that were established during the negotiation process<sup>3</sup>. As

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<sup>1</sup> Gunther Hellmann; Reinhard Wolf "Neorealism, Neoliberal Institutionalism, and the Future of NATO" *Security Studies*. 3:1 (1993). pp.8,10

<sup>2</sup> Barry Buzan (1983 revised second edition 1991). *People, States & Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*. pp.19-20

<sup>3</sup> Robert Jervis. *Realism, Neoliberalism, and Cooperation Understanding the Debate*. <http://www.pols.boun.edu.tr/uploads%5Cfiles%5C632.pdf> accessed on 15 June 2012. pp.44-45

mentioned above, the gains are absolute; therefore the European states did not find enough incentives to defect<sup>1</sup>. Instead of that they choose to cooperate on a deeper level.

In what regards the national preferences, as Moravcsik believed, they are established at the domestic level and then are negotiated by the decision-makers at the European Parliament's level, or at European or Ministers' Council level<sup>2</sup>. Here we can say that the state with the highest relative bargaining power<sup>3</sup> is Germany, as it is the biggest member state of the Union and it is the most developed one.

### **The Eastern European Frontier and the Security Dimension**

Frontiers can be seen as institutionalised forms that are ruled by the international law's provisions or more specifically by the European legislation or by the national one. They can represent demarcation lines between two international organisation or two states, or an organisation and other states. Frontiers can also be seen as identity makers, taking into consideration the fact that within them there are stashed common identities, common values to which all parties accede to<sup>4</sup>. From a technical point of view, frontiers are filters through which individuals must pass in order to travel from a state to another. In this sense, they have to be organized through institutionalized rules and procedures between the direct involved parties in order to deal with the security problems that can arise. Maybe the most important characteristic of this concept is the fact that frontiers represent meeting points between different political, administrative, and even educational systems. These points can determine the development of cooperation between the parties that want to tackle together the existing and future threats or with their common vulnerabilities. At the opposite side it can evolve in a competitive or a point of friction between them<sup>5</sup>.

In what regards the Eastern frontier of the EU, this is clearly evolving under the institutionalist neo-liberalism paradigm. The last three rounds of enlargement brought into its attention a new security architecture that needed to be taken into account in order for the Europeans to answer properly to the region's specific threats and vulnerabilities. Thus, on the one side, we can identify member states that have expressed their national preferences towards the development of a relationship based on politico-economical cooperation with the Eastern European states that are not members of the EU. These are rather economic reason rather than security and strategic ones<sup>6</sup>. On the other side, we can identify the eastern states like Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia that are interested in creating and promoting a multilateral relationship between them and the EU in order to develop a future partnership, or even a future accession to

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<sup>1</sup> Scott Burchill et al. *Theories of International Relations*. Third edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) [http://gendocs.ru/docs/35/34939/conv\\_1/file1.pdf](http://gendocs.ru/docs/35/34939/conv_1/file1.pdf) accessed on 15 June 2012. p.65

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Moravcsik. *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998). p.24

<sup>3</sup> *Theories of European integration*. [http://www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/9780199544813/bache3e\\_ch01.pdf](http://www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/9780199544813/bache3e_ch01.pdf) accessed on 15 June 2012. pp.13-14

<sup>4</sup> Hastings Donnan and Thomas M Wilson, *Border: Frontier of Identity, Nation and State* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 1999)

<sup>5</sup> Malcolm Anderson. *Border Regimes and Security in an enlarged European Community: Implication of the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty*. <http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/1648/Anderson.pdf?sequence=1> accessed on 15 June 2012. p.2

<sup>6</sup> Ioan Horga, Dorin I. Dolghi, "Security approaches at the Eastern border of the European Union", *Romanian Journal of Security Studies*. Vol.1, no2, 2010, pp.114-130



the European structures. The main promoters of the Eastern frontier development inside the EU are the new member states that are also Eastern countries like: Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Romania. They are also frontier states; thus, it is natural for them to have national preferences in this regard. In this situation we could talk about national preference in security terms, if we take into consideration the fact that an economic stable relationship, which is developed at the frontier, is intrinsically assuming a stable relationship from a security point of view. Additionally, as Buzan was saying, security is an expanded concept; therefore, we no longer see it in realist terms. Through the development of some partnership or agreements the Eastern states that are also frontiers of the EU want to generate a state of security and stability between them and the non-member states. In this context they have domestically formed their national preferences and started to negotiate them at the European level. In order to have an increased relative bargaining power, they formed coalitions in order to counter-balance the preferences that were coming from other European states in order to promote more efficiently their preferences<sup>1</sup>. The result of these negotiations was the Eastern Partnership which was adopted in 2009 and which encompasses six eastern neighbours: Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus. Also, the implementation of free trade areas, visa-free regimes and new economic agreements with these afore mentioned states were also followed<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, these states are extremely important in what regards the military and energy dimension for Europe. For example, Ukraine is crucial in terms of energy security taking into account the fact that through its national territory is passing Druzhba pipeline, which is transporting approximately 80% from the European gas demand<sup>3</sup>. In 2005 the EU has signed with Ukraine an Action Plan that is aimed to develop a relationship based on win-win cooperation through gradual economic integration and political cooperation<sup>4</sup>, aspects that can be found in the national preferences of the Eastern states that were mentioned above. Moldova is another important state for the stability and security of the Eastern region, especially for the Romanian state, taking into consideration that they have a direct frontier with each other. In this case Moldova is more like a security consumer, if we make references to the Transnistrian conflict<sup>5</sup>. Also in 2005 the European Union Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) in Moldova and Ukraine was launched. Its mission is *“to make a sustainable contribution to the development of border-management procedures that meet European Union standards and serve the legitimate needs of Moldovan and Ukrainian citizens, travelers, and trade, which in turn enhances regional security and supports economic development”*<sup>6</sup>. Thus, the Eastern side of

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<sup>1</sup> *Theories of European integration*. [http://www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/9780199544813/bache3e\\_ch01.pdf](http://www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/9780199544813/bache3e_ch01.pdf) accessed on 15 June 2012. pp.13-14

<sup>2</sup> Ramūnas Vilpišauskas. *National preferences and bargaining of the new member states since the enlargement of the EU into the Central and Eastern Europe: the Baltic States – policy takers, mediators, initiators?* [http://euce.org/eusa/2011/papers/1h\\_vilpisauskas.pdf](http://euce.org/eusa/2011/papers/1h_vilpisauskas.pdf) accessed on 14 June 2012. p.27

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Hamilton; Gerhard Mangott. *The New Eastern Europe: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova* [http://transatlantic.sais-jhu.edu/publications/books/new\\_eastern\\_europe\\_text.pdf](http://transatlantic.sais-jhu.edu/publications/books/new_eastern_europe_text.pdf) accessed la 4 June 2012. p.2

<sup>4</sup> *EU/Ukraine Action Plan*. [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action\\_plans/ukraine\\_enp\\_ap\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/ukraine_enp_ap_final_en.pdf) accessed on 15 June 2012

<sup>5</sup> Nicu Popescu, “Noile oportunități de soluționare a problemei transnistrene prin mecanismele Europei modern”, *Institutul de Politici Publice*, September 26, 2003, [http://www.policy.hu/npopescu/publications/ue\\_trans.pdf](http://www.policy.hu/npopescu/publications/ue_trans.pdf) accessed on la 14 June 2012. p.12

<sup>6</sup> The European Union Border Assistance Mission official website. <http://www.eubam.org/en/about/overview> accessed on 15 June 2012

Europe is very important for the security of the entire European Union and specifically for the Eastern states from a military, energy, political and economic point of view. In this context, a deeper development level of this frontier is predictable as Russia is still a major player of this space, its strategy having the power to influence the development of the region.

### **Romania's status ambivalence**

As a member state of NATO and of the EU, Romania has many options in promoting its national interest (at NATO's level under the neo-realist logic) or in promoting its national preferences (within the EU's structures under the institutionalist neo-liberalism umbrella).

Being an Eastern frontier state, the national interests/preferences of Romania are clearly headed towards the development of a stable, threats free area, in which this country or the international organisation that is parts of are directly interested in having close relations based on cooperation and dialogue with the states that are non-members. Through its foreign policy that is established by the decision makers at the domestic level Romania is seen and it must maintain its role of being *"a promoter of the consolidating peace, security and stability in these areas. Bucharest authorities brought under regulation on juridical basis of equality and cooperation its relationship with the majority of states from that specific areas and it also encourages the development of the democratic processes from the South Caucasus region"*<sup>1</sup>.

As a member state of the EU, Romania was one of the promoters of the Eastern Partnership development, of the closed agreements with Moldova, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia. The 2008 Georgian war had a direct negative effect over the European security and over its economic stability. As an example, the commercial trade between Georgia and Romania decreased during this period *"from a total of 239,4 millions \$ in 2008 to 185, 2 millions \$ in 2009"*<sup>2</sup>. Having said that, Romania clearly expressed its national preferences within the EU and as a consequence the entire organisation intervened and succeeded in signing a six points plan with Russia that ceased the fire.

Also from the national preferences perspective, the Romanian state was clearly interested and intensely promoted within the EU the development of a productive and efficient relationship with Moldova. The reasons are understandable given the fact that Romania's border with Moldova's represents 33% from its national border line. Taking into account that this is also the European Eastern frontier, Romania had a relative big bargaining power in this respect. This border is important, because after that of Hungary's, it is intensely threatened by illegal trafficking, thus its underdevelopment or a low level of securitization here, represent a state of insecurity felt at the EU's level, and not only at the Romanian level<sup>3</sup>.

Regarding the Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Moldova and Romania, it extends far from the dual status of Romania. Romania was the first state which recognized the

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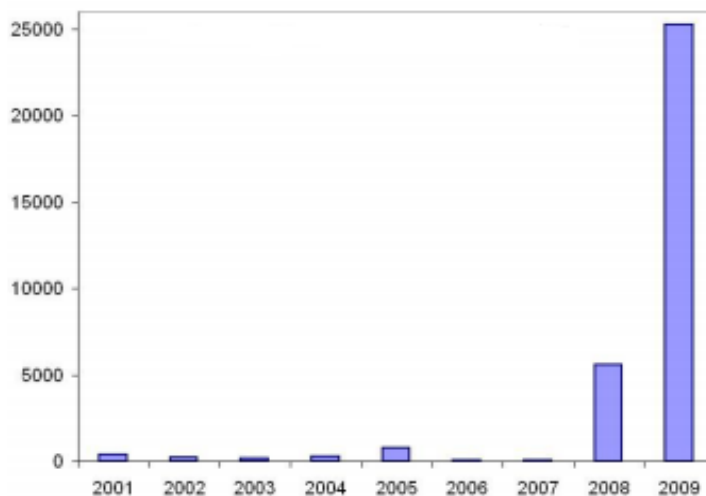
<sup>1</sup> Cristian Băhnăreanu. *Cursa înarmărilor în arcu de insecuritate din vecinătatea estică a Uniunii Europene. Consecințe pentru România*. (București: Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare "Carol I", 2010) Available at: [cssas.unap.ro/ro/pdf\\_studii/cursa\\_inarmarilor\\_in\\_arcul.pdf](http://cssas.unap.ro/ro/pdf_studii/cursa_inarmarilor_in_arcul.pdf) accessed on 15 June 2012. p.53

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem.p.56

<sup>3</sup> *Migrants and Borders Romania and Moldova*. [http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/63/82/53/PDF/EWP\\_migrants\\_borders\\_moldova.pdf](http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/63/82/53/PDF/EWP_migrants_borders_moldova.pdf) accessed on 15 June 2012. p.3

independence of Moldova<sup>1</sup>. Since it entered the EU, Romania has tried to attract the Europeans' attention towards the integration of Moldova. In terms of diplomacy, Bucharest has always sent experienced ambassadors to Chisinau, whereas other states were sending ambassadors who were in their early or late careers. This proves its huge interest in developing a prolific bilateral relationship with Moldova<sup>2</sup>.

Additionally, Romania was an important promoter of EU's implication in the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, where the EU is now an observer in the 5+1 negotiation format. But Romania has also national interests in what regards its bilateral relationship with Moldova. An example in this matter is the Romanian policy regarding the Romanian citizenship granting. In 2006 (a year before Romania's accession to the EU) *"the Moldavians needed a visa and an invitation from a Romanian citizen, and their stay could not exceed 90 days. [.....] 2009, when the electoral context introduced new facilitations speeding-up the process of granting the citizenship. Based on similar citizenship legislation from Hungary (2001), Poland (2000), Israel, Bulgaria, etc., in 2009, the Government Ordinance 36/15.04.2009 expanded the 'restored' citizenship rights to third line relatives (instead of second line relatives as before). The capacity of processing the citizenship dossiers have been substantially increased by the creation of five new regional offices and the reduction of the check deadline from six to five months. As a consequence, 25.257 persons (21.299 Moldavians) regained the right to a Romanian citizenship in 2009, compared to a 5.590 persons, in 2008 (4.967 Moldavians)"*<sup>3</sup>, as it can be seen in the next table:



Source: Eurostat, RIO.

This policy illustrates the strategic ambivalence of Romania because these agreements are strictly bilateral between Romania and Moldova and they represent strictly the Romanian national interest and not the will or the interest of NATO or of the EU. Moreover, they represent the effects of the strategic partnership between the two and they develop independently from the European

<sup>1</sup> Gabriel Andreescu, Valentin Stan and Renate Weber (1994), *Romania's Relations with The Republic of Moldova*, Centre for International Studies, accessed on 2 April 2013 at: <http://studint.ong.ro/moldova.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Online Interview Nicu Popescu (2012), *Nicu Popescu, cercetator la European Council on Foreign Relations: Prohorov nu este un om anti-Kremlin. A intrat in campanie cu acordul lui Putin*, HotNews, accessed on 1 March 2013 at [http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-alegeri\\_rusia\\_2012-11690418-nicu-popescu-cercetator-european-council-foreign-relations-discuta-online-joi-12-00-despre-alegerile-din-rusia-impactul-realegerii-lui-putin-asupra-relatiilor-politice-internationale.htm](http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-alegeri_rusia_2012-11690418-nicu-popescu-cercetator-european-council-foreign-relations-discuta-online-joi-12-00-despre-alegerile-din-rusia-impactul-realegerii-lui-putin-asupra-relatiilor-politice-internationale.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem. pp.6-7

or the Euro-Atlantic will, because these two structures do not have the capabilities to restrict one state's right. In this sense, national states are still the most important international players.

### Conclusions

After 2007 the Romanian state was included in some of the most important regional structures, NATO and the EU, but at the same time this enlargement round brought the Europeans and the North Atlantic much closer to the trouble areas of Europe, the Eastern Europe, a region that can be characterised by instability, security consume and political regimes that do not always follow the principles of the liberal democratic regime as it is understood by the West. Moreover, the two also got very close to what Russia considers its near abroad territory, thus its negative reactions. This last action, under the preconditions of a neo-realist logic can transform into a security dilemma in which Romania will have to manage very well its options in terms of national interests and national preferences, as a mistake here can affect the security of the entire Eastern region. As a frontier state of NATO and of the EU, Romania has the responsibility and the opportunity to secure the area and to bring its own added value. To be able to do that, it has to become more active and more efficient.

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